

LETTERS



Comp Rates Unfair For Laborers

To the Editor:

Your article "Straight Talk About Workers Comp" (2/92) is well-written; however, it does not address the subject of construction laborers nor the fact that the National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI) does not have a classification code for "construction laborer." It has been my experience that the workers comp insurance carrier always classifies laborers as carpenters, which is not correct. There are one or two other codes that are applicable, such as "cleaner-debris removal," which have substantially lower rates.

Every builder should review the published classification book [available from NCCI, Boca Raton, Fla.] to understand what the classifications are and how these apply to their firm. That information makes a dramatic difference in your rate.

Finally, all contractors in business owe it to themselves to discuss this in great detail with their insurance carrier. The contractor may know more about the subject than the insurance carrier, which would not be surprising.

N. Claiborne Porter, Jr.
NCP Construction Ltd.
Anchorage, Alaska

Radius Stair Tip

To the Editor:

The headline of the article "Framing a Radius Stair" (2/93) states, "Get the layout right and the framing of this curved stair is easy." The article is somewhat out-of-alignment with this headline, don't you think?

Mr. Thompson says, "Having the 10-degree marks so close to the radius point meant that I had to constantly adjust my tread widths...to make sure each matched the others." This is not the best way to lay out a custom stairway. Instead, he should curve his measuring tape around the outside sill plate and divide that distance by the number of treads required.

Howard Stidham
Bakersfield, Calif.

OSB Shear Values

To the Editor:

"Shear Wall Basics," by Jim Hart (1/93) is an excellent article. However, Mr. Hart is incorrect in his reference to the shear values of oriented-strandboard (OSB).

The Structural Board Association (SBA) and the American Plywood Association (APA) have carried out extensive testing on OSB to develop

engineering design values and have consistently found similar shear values between OSB and equivalent grades of plywood. The reason OSB has good shear value in the plane of the panel (planar shear) is due to the relatively homogenous nature of OSB, compared to the individual plies in plywood.

The SBA has also compared OSB and plywood under conditions of dynamic loading (similar to earthquake action) and the results showed equivalency with plywood, a fact recognized in the seismic design section of the Canadian wood design code.

I believe that the reason OSB is not used as extensively as plywood is due to the lack of understanding by carpenters and designers of the product's ability and performance.

Both the SBA and the APA publish load-carrying tables for shear walls and diaphragms using the same values for both panel products. I understand these tables are well accepted by the design community.

John D. Lowood, P.E.
Structural Board Association
Willowdale, Ontario

Keep 'em coming.... We welcome letters, but they must be signed and include the writer's address. *The Journal of Light Construction* reserves the right to edit for grammar, length, and clarity. Mail letters to JLC, RR#2, Box 146, Richmond, VT 05477.